

HERMES



WESLEYAN'S MAGAZINE OF POLITICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THOUGHT



ENLARGED
TO SHOW
TEXTURE

Vol. 25 • Issue No. 2
April 1999

INSIDE:
The Mall, Mohegan Sun,
Heteronormative Figure Skaters,
Radical Honesty, Deconstructing
Iraq, and much much more!

Activism: the Horizon

You may not know it, but there's a lot happening in student activism at Wesleyan right now. WesUnity (<http://www.wesleyan.edu/wesunity>) has done more to coordinate student groups than any umbrella group in recent memory. The Center for Leadership and Learning Committee is working with administrators to secure institutional support for student activism, and in the meantime it's working with and learning from a range of student groups on campus as well as training people in meeting facilitation and participation techniques.

And *Hermes*? Well, we're resolved to play the part of campus alternative publication a little bit better and be more of an resource for student activism.

In just a couple weeks we'll be starting our last issue of the year, a theme issue devoted to student activism. If you're interested in writing for or working on an issue dealing with where student activism is, was, and could go—here, nationally, or internationally—then get in touch using the contact information below. If you want to publish something on behalf of a group you work with, the deadline is April 20th.

And it's not just next issue: if you ever want to get the word out about something—be it a struggle, a tragedy, or a miracle—just swing on by. Next time you're trying to slice an article down to the Wespeak word limit, remember—*Hermes* will take you. *Hermes* will probably be desperate. BRIAN EDWARDS-TIEKERT

ABOUT HERMES

For nearly 25 years, *Hermes* has been starting trouble at Wesleyan. It was founded in 1975 by a group of student activists disgruntled with (among other things), Wesleyan's school newspaper, *the Argus*. In Greek mythology, it was Hermes, God of Mischief, who slew the hundred-eyed Argus. *Hermes* bore the distinction of being New England's longest-running progressive student publication until it stopped production for the '91-'92 academic year. Subsequently revived as monthly journal, *Hermes* isn't an *Argus* rival anymore—now we to provide a more political, critical, and creative approach issues on and off-campus.

We produce seven or eight issues per academic year, publishing material with a decidedly leftish slant. Anythings's fair game; we publish investigative pieces, report on causes and issues that don't make it into the mainstream press, and serve as a forum for progressive and radical thought on campus. We aim to raise awareness, spark debate, politicize University life, and energize the student body.

Anyone is welcome to join. We are organized as a non-hierarchical collective and informal meetings every Wednesday at 9:30 upstairs in the WSA building (190 High St.). In addition to writers, we need people willing to proofread, edit, take photographs, and help with layout. We have no permanent positions and nobody is in charge; decisions are made by the entire staff. You can get in touch with us (860) 685-7195, email us at hermes@mail.wesleyan.edu, or check out our web page at <http://www.wesleyan.edu/hermes>. And if you don't like what you read here, join us and write your own articles.

Cover Design by Jessica Fantz

Spring is in the Air

The telltale signs are here—Frisbees, drummers, hickies, spontaneous laughter, bloated pre-frosh tours, and radical drops in class attendance. Two days ago one of my classes got so giddy that even the teacher was interrupting herself with laughter.

If you're feeling a little Spring Fever, I'd like to encourage you to direct it to one of the most productive, rewarding, and fun types of seasonal student activism on campus—tour freaking (alternately known as 'tour terrorism,' 'show stealing,' and 'being an exhibitionist').

The idea is simple—just do something to give the pre-frosh the impression that this is a weird place in a seriously wonderful way. Put on a show. Infiltrate and ask the guide probing questions. Dance a tango. Kiss someone—anyone—of the same gender. Go streaking. Swallow swords. Try walking backwards next to the guide and see if you can get the pre-frosh to follow you instead.

With a little luck, the pre-frosh will get the hint—the squares will shift their sights and the freaks will matriculate, insuring that Wesleyan remains the strangest ivory tower of them all.

BRIAN EDWARDS-TIEKERT

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Welcome to Lesbeyan	Kat Holbein
Gay Hydrant	Sarah Wilkes
Gay Tree	Adam Hurter
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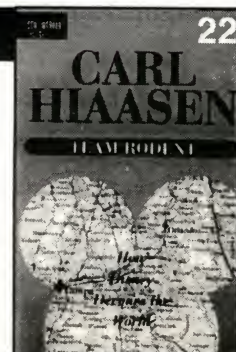
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MAIL BIN

FAIR ELECTIONS?

Northampton, VT

Imagine if, in the 1996 presidential election:

—The opposition candidate, Bob Dole, had not been allowed in the country, and had been forced to make his appearances, and hand out his literature, from Canada.

—The candidate in power, Bill Clinton, had been able to force voters to attend meetings to watch pro-Clinton videos and hear pro-Clinton speeches.

—People had been required to meet with government officials to be questioned about their voting preferences.

—Although in theory people could not be penalized for supporting the opposition, in practice the government could deport anyone who dissented. To get back in, the person would have to win a hearing to determine if they'd been deported because of their political beliefs. Even if the person won, the government could appeal and delay and appeal again, and the person would remain deported until the case

was finally settled.

—If Clinton lost, he could appeal the result and stay in power until the final appeal was exhausted years later. Think it can't happen in America?

Think again—that's the way elections work for workers trying to form a union. When an election is held to decide whether or not the workers want a union, union representatives aren't allowed on the company property, and pro-union workers can only talk about the union at lunch and on breaks. The company, on the other hand, can force workers to attend meetings to watch anti-union videos or hear pro-company speeches. Workers can be required to meet with supervisors and be questioned about their views.

In theory, no one can be fired or disciplined for pro-union attitudes, but in practice it happens all the time. Fired workers can go to the National Labor Relations Board. If it rules in favor of the worker, the company can appeal—for three years. The worker doesn't get the job back until all appeals are exhausted. The only penalty to the company? Paying

what the worker would have earned—minus whatever he or she earned elsewhere in the meantime.

The United States today is almost the only democracy that allows employers to be involved when employees vote on whether or not they want to be represented by a union. Labor law was supposed to guarantee workers the right to decide for themselves, but little by little that law has been subverted.

The right to organize must become a human right, as fundamental as the right to vote or the right to be free of discrimination based on race or sex. For that to happen, the law needs to be changed, legal violations need to be punished swiftly and severely, and the media need to expose violations of workers' rights. If we level the playing field, millions of workers will choose to go union. DAN CLAWSON

Dan Clawson is Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and is the national chair of Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice.

EVENTS: YALE LABOR CONFERENCE

Attend a Labor Movement teach-in from April 16 to 18 at Yale University, New Haven, CT. The teach-in—with the theme "Challenging Corporate Control"—is sponsored by Scholars, Artists and Writers for Social Justice (SAWSJ), the unions at Yale and the Yale Student Labor Action Coalition.

The conference, featuring many renowned speakers, will address organizing workers into unions and the right to organize, the role of the university in the New Labor Movement, the relationship between unions and the community, and the Union Cities initiative. Among those scheduled to speak are Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Hearts and Men*; Richard Trumka, the secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO; *Nation* columnist Katha Pollitt; and Frances Fox Piven, co-author of *Poor People's Movements*.

Friday will start with a solidarity march to support graduate student organizing and a plenary session. Sessions on Saturday and Sunday will include Economics of the University, Creating a Labor-Left Op-Ed Network, Alternative Models of Organizing, Living Wage Campaigns, Community/Labor Coalitions, and reports on major on-going struggles in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and the University of California system.

To register or for more information, write to SAWSJ, c/o Labor Relations and Research Center, Draper Hall, UMass, Amherst, MA 01003, or e-mail sawsj@lrrc.umass.edu. The cost is \$20 (\$5 for students and low-income participants) which may be paid in advance by mail or at the door.

HERMES INDEX

(With apologies to *Harper's Magazine*)

1. Number of pesticides applied to the average commercially grown tomato: 23
2. Number of pounds of pesticides used in the United States annually: 3 billion
3. Number of chemicals used daily in U.S. commerce and industry: 70,000
4. Amount that Northeast Utilities was forced to pay in fines in 1997 when the company's three nuclear power reactors in Waterford, Connecticut were forced to close down because of safety violations: \$2.1 billion
5. Number of gallons of high-level nuclear wastes generated from military and civilian reactor programs currently stored in Idaho, New York, South Carolina and Washington: 100 million.
6. Land area disturbed by coal surface mining in the United States by the late 1990s: 5.7 million acres (approximately the size of New Hampshire)
7. GDP per capita in Iraq in 1981: \$2840
8. In 1997: \$200
9. Iraqi child mortality rate (number of deaths per 1000 of children under age five) from 1985-1990: 40
10. From 1990-95: 198
11. Number of deaths due to fighting between Serbian and Albanian forces in the ten years leading up to the NATO strike on Serbia: 2,000
12. Number of deaths due to bombings and fighting in the first week of NATO's strike: 1,000

Sources: -1-6 Walter Rosenbaum, Environmental Politics and Policy; 7-8, *The Lancet* 346 Dec. 2, 1995 p. 1485; 9-10 Peter Boone, Harris Gadazar and Athan Hussain, Sanctions Against Iraq: Costs of Failure; 11-12, Zoran Milutinovich, Visiting Professor of Russian Studies

SISSIES ON ICE

WHY THE CAMERAS LOVE MICHAEL WEISS

by Laura Clawson

"[Men's figure skating national champion Michael] Weiss, 22, is unusual in the figure skating world for several reasons. For one, the resident of Fairfax, Va, is the first male Virginian to win a national title. Another reason was poignantly evident after Weiss finished his program and dashed up into the Delta Center stands to be with his wife/choreographer, Lisa, and his infant daughter, Annie-Mae. As Trifun Zivanovic skated the glittering program that would catapult him to a silver medal, there sat Weiss, wife at his side, the skater bottle-feeding his daughter as he watched every move of his foe far below on the ice."

— Michael Madden, Boston Globe, February 14, 1999

What exactly is unusual about Michael Weiss according to this passage? At 22, Weiss is still young for a male figure skater (a woman of 22 would be at the top of, if not actually over, the hill), but perhaps we're supposed to credit him with maturity beyond his years.

Who knows? The skating world may just be overjoyed at having such a paragon of maturity among them, but there's another reason that Weiss's wife Lisa gets more air time than the coaches of most Olympic medalists. Every time she appears on television, a little flag is being waved, pointing the eyes of the entire world to the straight male figure skater.

This is the fear that runs through coverage of men's figure skating—that it is dominated by, you know, sissies. Hence, when Ilia Kulik was about to win gold in Nagano, CBS ran a story about him. The piece introduced Kulik to the Olympic audience of non-hardcore skating fans, summarizing his career to that point. But the most striking part of the story was when a string of interviewees, led by Kurt Browning, were shown commenting on how much girls love Ilia, who has also been described as the Leonardo diCaprio of figure skating. Perennial US national champion Todd Eldredge also received such treatment: although Eldredge is more than 10 years older than his newly-pubescent training partner Tara Lipinski, their friendship has been much dwelt-upon in some fairly sexualized ways. People magazine, for instance, ran a photograph of Todd getting a massage as Tara looked on, and Tara's parents were interviewed about the possibility that their annoying and untalented daughter might someday marry Eldredge.

These ploys are only slightly more subtle than the "I may be a figure skater but I'm no fag" stylings of Elvis Stojko and Philippe Candeloro, silver and bronze medalists in 1994 and 1998. Stojko, of course, is distinguished by a number of things. Ranked highly among them are his stumpy little body and Mr. Potatohead face. But these are things he can't really avoid (though his bad hair is his own fault); however, they only contribute to his whole more-butth-than-thou act, which includes constant discussion of karate and dirt bikes, as well as some really lame choreography. Philippe Candeloro's equally odious performance of masculinity

tends to involve skating barechested and making frequent trips off the ice to stagily kiss women in the audience.

But Michael Weiss gives promoters of men's skating a more subtle way to claim masculinity for their sport, and, it should be said, he is an enthusiastic collaborator in this attempt. He has been taped lifting weights and pointing out that upper body strength is what enable skaters to do big jumps, masculinizing big jumps by associating them with the type of strength that men have more of than women. He has identified his so-far unsuccessful attempts to do quadruple jumps in competition as coming in part from a desire to make skating a sport that more men watch. Wife Lisa, however, remains the most valuable weapon in the arsenal of evidence that Michael is straight and he is literally never shown on television unaccompanied by references to her and, now, their daughter Annie-Mae.

Anthropologist Victor Turner has written that liminal states, those that cannot be defined or exist between defined roles, are seen as most dangerous; this is amply demonstrated by representations of the sexuality of male figure skaters. The strategies used to mark individual skaters as heterosexual are interesting and on occasion hilarious in their slightly desperate feel. They are less interesting, though, than what network television does when given a safely straight skater like Weiss to work with.

Weiss, you see, has two choreographers. One is his ubiquitous wife; the other gets much less attention than Lisa, but still receives more air time than the choreographer of 3-time national champion, 2-time world champion, and Olympic silver medalist Michelle Kwan. I must confess that I have forgotten the name of choreographer #2, but that's not really important. What's important is that he has AIDS.


The AIDS choreographer, as he has come to be known in my house, has been the subject of human-interest stories during the 1998 Olympics and the 1999 US Nationals. These are fairly typical sob stories about his dedication in the face of adversity. Nancy Kerrigan had first a blind mother and then a violent attack; the AIDS choreographer has blood clots in his legs and serious financial trouble because of medical expenses. We're never quite told how he contracted the virus, but we can all guess, can't we?

It becomes even easier to guess how he got it when Michael Weiss is shown saying that "I knew he was sick but I'm not one to judge." We don't, after all, judge people for having tuberculosis or ebola, both of which are more communicable than HIV, or for having any number of similarly avoidable diseases. We judge people for having HIV or AIDS because it means they might be gay. Not that we'd want to say so directly on network TV.

When the networks locate homosexuality, however inferentially, in a choreographer, someone responsible for the artistic area of figure skating, they imply that this is where it begins and

ends. Because if they're comfortable dealing with it like this, then the fact that they don't identify any of the actual competitors as gay must mean that Rudy Galindo, who no longer skates in Olympic-eligible competition and in any case spins better than he jumps, is just the only queer figure skater there is.

Why do we assume that male figure skaters are gay, anyway? Are they? Why does it matter? Would straight men be any more likely to watch skating if everyone was certifiably heterosexual? Why does Elvis Stojko's almost cartoonish insistence on his own

traditional masculinity seem to be successful? Why do the networks and, presumably, the publicity agents for figure skating as a sport think we're so stupid that we'd believe that, having had two men identified as gay, we'd assume we'd received full disclosure? I'd be especially insulted by this if I were a straight man. After all, it's an accusation of stupidity. I wouldn't take that lightly; I'd become the biggest fan of the least butch skater I could find. 

I Go HUMBLE

[NOT] COPING WITH WES INFERIORITY

by Stephanie Gline

Such a day of tumult. A sloppy wet howl in the morning, and a long howl at that. Along the way to chemistry and in between equations. The all too familiar grief of rejection.

Forty laps. I tried to swim it off. I was upset the other times, but it was never this bad. I suppose after things build up they seem worse than after just once, twice or even thrice but sevenice? (Or however one would say it.) Being at a school where everyone seems to be talented at something has led me to feel as though the only art I have mastered is that of rejection. This does not mean that I feel that I am talentless, I have just begun to question what it was that I once thought I was good at.

I knew and was excited about the immense difference between being a student at a public high school in my hometown South Orange, New Jersey and being a student at a university like Wesleyan. What I did not realize was how difficult it would be to be surrounded by so many brilliant, driven people. I love to dance. I love to sing. I love to write poetry. In high school I did all of these things, as I do now. But in high school I was able to be a towns-person in the back of the stage and not be a lead, I was able to have lots of my poetry published in our literary magazine, I was able to choreograph dances for our school dance group.


One of the reasons why I chose Wesleyan was because it offered so many opportunities to be involved in the arts and in my interests. Although at Wesleyan I can express my individuality, I cannot get into plays and groups and literary magazines with the ease that I could last year. I expected this. I hoped that this would happen because I hoped that I would be with people more talented than myself so that I could be in constant awe and appreciation of them. But, I also hoped that I would eventually find myself accepted into something. I want to feel a gratification far greater than that of being an old lady at the back of a stage or having a piece I wrote in just an OK magazine in high school as opposed to a really impressive one here.

I love Wesleyan so much because of all the people that go here. I like how they take risks to reveal themselves in new and sometimes odd ways. I spend my weekends going to dance shows, plays and concerts baffled by the abilities of the same

people who sit next to me in class or who choose which muffin to eat the same time that I do in the morning. Watching other people perform motivates me to try to explore myself as well. Unfortunately, my success with the activities I have tried out for has been quite limited. It is hard to watch people who I auditioned with perform and to recognize that I was given the same chance as they were. Among such a talented student body, rejection is often eminent. It is hard to face rejection.

Usually I try to convince myself that the problem of rejection will help me improve who I am. It will make me a stronger Stephanie Eve Gline. At the same time though, I wish that I did not have to be amazing to be a part of something. I wish I could just be accepted for the huge effort that I am putting in, even though I may not be the world's best.

I understand that at a school like Wesleyan, competition is much greater than at a high school. I understand the difficulty in being picked when there are thirty other people trying just as hard as I am. I am just feeling frustrated. I like constantly being challenged by the talent surrounding me but it is not easy to feel as though I am the worst. I want to be able to do more of the things that I am passionate about and not feel as though I can't just because everyone else is so good.

And what can I do? Not much, except to try out for the eighth time and ninth and infinity or until I self-destruct, whichever comes first. Auditions are draining. This comment is coming from the audition expert. I have tried out for seven different groups and maybe that is a small number for a freshman compared to everyone else, but I find that trying to be my best for two or four hours in front of people who are often obviously better or just as good is not easy. The time I spend preparing for auditions, either dancing or writing or just being really nervous and unable to eat, the time I spend during the audition and the time I spend afterwards waiting, expecting, depressed and moping is a lot. It's a lot of time. It's a lot of me that I am giving away, a lot of me that I am throwing into peoples' faces. Me that I want to give away. But oh how I want someone to take me! Want me! Just once! That's all I ask. 

FAST TIMES AT THE MALL

PRIESTS, RUBBER CHICKENS, AND STICKING IT TO THE MAN

by Sara Donnelly

I went to the Mall looking for a story, a thriller, an adventure, even a romance. The Mall had always slyly offered up plenty: arguments in the Food Court, children rebelling, mothers stressing, dudes on the make, and chicks too aware of their cuteness. The Mall has a thick American accent—awkward, friendly, and a unabashedly nerdy.

The Meriden Mall is nestled in a little wooded pocket just off of Route 691. It has two floors and over 120 boutiques, from a

really cool nail shop to a strip of H & R Block cubicles whose employees' first order of business is to actively ignore the fact that their rivals include Ruby Tuesdays and Filenes. Track lighting and high ceilings are the name of the game, and this Mall even sports a small glass elevator for the especially daring or the especially lazy. My grandmother

tells stories of days when shopping included fresh air and opening and closing doors, when the quality of a restaurant wasn't directly proportional to the cuteness of its mascot, when stairs didn't move. I don't know about all that, but I do know I get dizzy if I walk around in Sears for too long.

This past week, I visited the Meriden Mall with two friends. We went straight to the Food Court where I left Josh and Tyler riveted by Mall TV as I interviewed two Mall chicks. Joanie and Stacy, both 16, are from the area and visit the Mall about twice a month. Big fans of Victoria's Secret, West Farms, and American Eagle, Joanie and Stacy tackle the Mall strictly on their terms—they take pictures of themselves in outfits from the Rave and Contempo and then have their makeup done at JC Penney. I luckily had caught them before their excursion and their anticipation was

palpable, "We recommend the Rave" they said. I noted their recommendation but added I was partial to the sundresses at Contempo. While Stacy finished her curly fries, I took the opportunity to ask them about the social scene at the Mall. They laughed and rolled their eyes. "No social scene" said Joanie. When quizzed about the guys, Joanie was speechless, apparently unable to recall any words sufficient to describe the desperate situation. Stacy told me that if I was definitely set on looking for a guy here, though she wouldn't recommend it, I might try

Structure or American Eagle. Apparently, they had just hit American Eagle and come up dry, but they said I should give it a shot.

After wishing Joanie and Stacy luck at the Rave, I wandered out of the Food Court and ran into Jose and Travis, again both 16, lounging against the balcony in front of

Lane Bryant. Jose is a regular patron of the Mall, visiting about twice a week, while Travis is a bit more reclusive at twice a month. Both boys are from Meriden and listed their favorite stores as Time Out, Going to the Game, Pretzel Time and anything selling sneakers. When asked about the ladies, Travis was a bit tightlipped but Jose said, "The escalator, just go and stand there, you'll see 'em". I could tell Jose was a charmer. However, when I asked them how well their approaches usually work, Jose said he averaged two numbers a night while Travis had topped off at seven.

Josh and Josh and Tyler wanted to go into Victoria's Secret and as I was sick of reporting I agreed. We wandered around a bit and then Josh was struck with an idea. He gathered all the men in Victoria's Secret

together for a picture in front of one of the posters. The only



Judging from the shrill cry of the lady behind the counter, taking pictures in Victoria's Secret is either illegal or very, very bad.



The Pierogi Priest sells Polish dinner treats for charity.

other men in the store were two friendly teenage boys that had just bought a rubber chicken at Spencer's. They all gathered in front of a miracle bra poster and the teenage boys pulled out the chicken for the shot. I steadied the camera and heard the Victoria's Secret lady at the counter say, "You cant take pictures

for most of the time but then engaged in an hour long discussion about Christian doctrine with the Peirogi Priest as we were leaving. Finally, after neither had relinquished his religion, the Pierogi Priest bid us adieu and told us to call his radio show. We walked out into the cold winter air finishing the last bits of our

My grandmother tells stories of days when shopping included fresh air and opening and closing doors, when the quality of a restaurant wasn't directly proportional to the cuteness of its mascot, when stairs didn't move. I don't know about all that, but I do know I get dizzy if I walk around in Sears for too long.

in here." The photo was too great to pass up. I needed it for the Hermes, I needed it for me, I needed it for the children. I laughed in the face of danger, I laughed in the face of Victoria's Secret. They kicked us out.

On our way out of the Mall, Josh soothed my anger with ice cream and rainbow sprinkles (as a fugitive I was unable to purchase the naughty little slip I had found). Tyler had been quiet

ice cream, each of us changed by the Meriden Mall—a bit wiser, a bit more corrupted, a bit more American. ☺

The Mall is Expanding: By next Fall, the Meriden Square Mall plans to sport 25 new stores, a big department store, an equally big parking lot, and a Lord and Taylor. Hello progress.

Places to avoid in the Mall

1. *The Pet Store:* Sad little animals too cute to linger over if you aren't buying. I personally think it's best not to support these chains as they've been accused of overbreeding their animals. I can't scientifically back this up, but I can say that my first dog Snowball was a Mall dog and he was either retarded or mildly insane.
2. *Food shacks that mix pretzels with pizza:* Sketch.
3. *Jewelry stores selling real jewelry:* Too much money for things easily lost.
4. *Carts offering discount medical services like chiropractic adjustments.*

Places to check out in the Mall

This is definitely up to personal preference. However, there are some staple locations any self-respecting Mall goer has to at least pop into.

1. *The Food Court:* gross food and cheap desserts. The Meriden Mall has roughly 20 TVs mounted near the ceiling all tuned into "Mall TV." From what I can gather "Mall TV" seems to be a odd montage of children's television spliced with clips of the Victoria's Secret lingerie show.
2. *The Gap:* Love it or hate it, you've fallen under its spell at least once in your life.
3. *The Escalators:* Ride them with dignity or say fuck it and run up the down. When I was in fourth grade, a friend and I were killing some time on the escalators and

I had a near fall at the top as I was scrambling up the down stairs. At the crucial second, Chris grabbed my arm and pulled me to safety. I loved that boy.

4. *Any store selling slutty clothes:* Now, this is for the ladies, although the guys can tag along and pretend they're annoyed. The Rave and Contempo are top choices. Right now, the Rave is selling these cute little swatch-of-cloth tank tops in an array of pastels that match nicely with the ass-tight black pedal pushers that also double as

a five year old's pair of dress pants.

5. *The Book Store:* Look at the magazines or check out the other people desperately trying to convince themselves they're there for the high culture.

6. *The arcade:* Shoot some stuff, kick some stuff, win some shit.

7. *The Photo Booths:* We're psyched they're making a comeback and so is the woman at the T-shirt cart. Document the magic for only four dollars.



Josh and I immortalizing a moment in a mall photo booth.

Special Seasonal Treats

The Easter Bunny: Sit on his lap and smile for the camera.

The Surreal Jungle Ride: This is designed for kids but anyone could probably finagle a ride if they slip the Safari leader a hearty tip. For \$3, the guide will lead you around on his mechanical tiger or elephant while he comments on the wildlife. I have to admit I was unsettled by this ride and could only observe from a safe distance. 175lb weight limit per mechanical animal.

LIFE ON THE SUN

by Tyler Cabot

The streets of central Connecticut are deserted at eleven p.m. On back roads, driving east towards Colchester, there is an eerie darkness. Every turn is blind, every house we pass has its lights turned off, every store is closed. Pulled by an imaginary force, we are on a pilgrimage.

The car whines forward and we exit the freeway into the Pequot Indian Reservation. We rush toward the entrance at 60 miles per hour attacked by the lights, glaring from all angles, daring us to proceed. Now the signage, shining, dazzling; thousands of bulbs generating electricity and excitement. "Welcome to the Mohegan Sun," it spells. I read it as "Hurry up you slow fool—you are losing valuable time!!!" and accelerate. We coast along a road overlooking various parking lots—seas of metal, thousands of cars—we decide against valet parking and pull into the parking garage.

The Mohegan Sun, the third largest casino in the world, is managed by the Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut. Though they rake in millions of dollars a year (they netted \$331.9 million in 1998), they have not forgotten (or would like to appear to have not for-

gotten) their tribal roots. Daily, 20,000 "rush-seekers" visit the casino, trying their luck on the 3,000 slot machines and 150 game tables, under the manufactured glow of Mohegan heritage.

The hall leading towards the games is appointed with intricately carved wooden murals depicting tribal scenes; these run perpendicular to tapestries hanging from the ceiling. A bathroom featuring laser-sensor toilets and sinks, marble countertops and a non-odor odor, prepares you

for the floor (there can be nothing worse than having "to go" in the middle of a "hot streak.") Then comes the coat-check where a "coat-man" politely asks if you care to leave your jacket, so you won't have to lug it (he knows it is hard to gamble with your hands full). Lining the

throughway are jewelry stores and pricey designer clothing boutiques alongside some twenty restaurants—a little Rodeo Drive right here in Connecticut! The long corridor ends at a balcony overlooking the jam-packed floor below, which emits a din like thousands of bees all working and praying for some honey. At midnight when the rest of the state is dormant, places like the Mohegan Sun are not only open, but alive. Hundreds of people blearily awake for work each morning in disgust after a long night at the casino and a short night of sleep.

The crowd is very eclectic; Mohegan Sun does not discriminate. Finely dressed suit wearing professionals walk beside people who

GAMBLING IN CONNECTICUT

look as if they have slept in their clothes—some have. Twenty-somethings pull chrome handles beside senior citizens. Don't ask the time; there are no clocks. But, do enjoy the sites: murals, sculptures, and flashing lights. A rotating car display, waitresses in short skirts, artificial trees and gardens. There are only two places where a person is welcomed with open arms—no matter who they are—into an awe inspiring environment. The first is a church, the second is a casino. The floor buzzes with thousands of gamblers slurping down free drinks, looking for wins, looking for immediate gratification. The church may be able to offer Christ, but it can't offer this.

In the food court where players who can't afford the pricey restaurants find sustenance, an electrician picks at a slice of pizza topped with small puddles of grease. Why is he sitting alone eating cafeteria food at a casino in Uncasville, Connecticut at eleven-thirty? "Money," he answers matter-of-factly between bites, staring towards his hands, resisting eye contact. He says he doesn't come here too often, only three to five nights a week. In a rare moment of emotion he declares "If I make money I'll stay forever." This is a man who won't go to the casino with friends because they'll bog him down. He points towards a pillar of intricately patterned stones, one atop of another. "Everyone of these stones is loser money, not winner's money."

Two women sitting across the room are munching upon fried chicken with all the fixins'. "Just don't say we are addicted to gambling," they laugh. After insisting that I don't have a video camera and that they have not been targeted as compulsive gamblers, they relax a bit. "We come once or twice a month," they sheepishly admit. I tell them about the "habit" of the last guy I spoke to—their embarrassment fades. They dress in slacks and silk blouses with gold accessories, long painted nails. One is wearing a wedding band. A teacher at the Connecticut School for the

At Mohegan Sun, the floor buzzes with thousands of gamblers slurping down free drinks, looking for immediate gratification. The church may have Christ, but it can't offer this.



Deaf and a housewife, they shatter the stereotypical image of women gamblers—blowing their kids' food money at craps, or toting behind high rollers like hussy scavengers. "Some people really have a negative thing about gambling," one offers. "If I work, I take in my bills, I'm gonna spend time for myself. We do it for fun."

Scott is sitting alone at a table hidden behind a palm tree. His hair is matted to his forehead in shiny sweaty locks. Dressed in a gray suit, his shirt collar is unbuttoned, his tie hangs loose forming a corporate noose. Like the electrician, Scott too is staring down at his food, slouched in his chair. He wrestles with a calzone, using his fork and knife as weapons. "Lost," he declares between bites. Whereas once he was eating sulkily, he slows down, chatting between bites, sharing stories about a trip to Las Vegas and the blow-job he received in the back-seat of a car on his first trip to Foxwoods. "Do I get compulsive? Yeah of course. Fuck this!! I'm gonna win."

Alfred, an older gentlemen, is sitting on a bench between the food-court and the game floor awaiting his wife's arrival—she is playing the slots. A retiree, he sports a head of gray hair under a golf hat. He comes with his wife a few times a week. When the kids are in town from Texas they come along as well—"They love it." His wife

was supposed to meet him here at midnight—she is fifteen minutes late.

Bartenders feed gamblers the liquid they need to stay careless, to keep them from stopping. They know all the stories.

Bartenders feed gamblers the liquid they need to stay careless, to keep them from stopping. They witness the compulsory scene: people who sit at a single slot machine for ten hours at a time; people who urinate on barstools because they can't leave the table. "Supposedly some guy blew his head off [in the parking lot] after losing \$30,000, says one. The bar-back turns to her and jokes "Don't give your name. You'll get fired next week." The casino was attempting to keep the story out of the press.

John works security. He's one of the people in forest green jackets whose main duty is to keep the casino respectable—standing against a wall, watching, making sure everything runs smoothly. Average height, and rather slight, his body is not the ideal size for a guard. But as he explains, state troopers pose undercover on the floor in case there are any problems. He talks about the hard-cores (those who gamble from mid-night on), the pan-handlers ("We call them fleas—tell them to stop or

leave"), and the various "immoral acts" he has seen. He describes a recent fist-fight between a man and woman standing in line. "It was pretty neat but the guy split." There was a guy caught "shooting-up" in the bathroom: "they had to kick the door in—he was almost dead." As he talks about the children who roam the casino his voice rises. "Four or five year-olds walking around because dad and mom are playing slots." Gamblers receive one warning for leaving their kids unattended while they gamble, then they are arrested for child abuse.

At another bar the bartender is eager to talk about work, "I love my job—straight up. Where else can I talk to beautiful women all day and make lots of money?" With elbows resting on the bar he talks

rapidly and with excitement. His purple shirt fits tightly against his chest and his triceps show off a few tattoos. "Some people stay for days. You can see it in their eyes when they have been here for four days—same clothes—sleeping in a car." He offers a personal experience to illustrate the point: "I had a cocaine problem. I wouldn't

There are people who sit at a single slot machine for ten hours at a time; people who urinate on barstools because they can't leave the table.

leave my room. People have a rush—won't leave the table."

As I leave the floor, I again spot Alfred sitting on the same bench he was waiting at earlier. It is now after two—he is still waiting.



ACTIVISM AT HOME

COURTESY OF CCO

High Schoolers Strike Over Gay Assault

Over 1,000 students and workers struck the San Marin High School February 19 days after a gay student was assaulted and a group of students and parents filed an anti-racist lawsuit against the High School. The assistant superintendent claims the problem is "some incidents of a few" but the same gay student was bashed more than once and the lawsuit, in the lawyer's words, "alleges a pattern, practice and history of racial discrimination at San Marin High School."

FAU Administration Shuts Down Radical Conference

The Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton cancelled an on-campus gathering of various liberation movements in mid-February after police claimed the radicals were "terrorists." The administration's acceptance of police repression led to city-wide attacks on conference participants, including a death threat by an FBI agent against an American Indian Movement member in front of a nine-year-old child. The "Total Liberation" event relocated to a public park where federal and local authorities detained and questioned the activists. A few days later a coalition of groups announced a federal civil rights lawsuit against the police for "defamation, conspiracy, illegal search and seizure, death threats, and other civil rights violations."

RIT Students Protest Using Financial Aid to Fight Drugs

Students at the Rochester Institute of Technology are organizing a resolution against the federal government's refusal to grant financial aid against students with drug convictions. The group named Students for Sensible Drug Policy are outraged at a 1998 addition to the Higher Education Act which will deny or delay financial aid to students convicted of drug-related offenses. The main points of opposition from the student group are the racist effect of limiting financial aid for a category of population disproportionately people of color.

Coalition Overturns Homophobic Censorship

Queer activists and the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust mailed paragraphs previously censored from a Holocaust history textbook to recipients of the original publication. The initially censored passage included: "The doors of the third car open and homosexuals spill forth, males only, because as Himmler concluded, 'lesbians can give birth.' The taunting jeers and blows of the guards stun the men. They will stay a night and then be rerouted to Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald to be with their kind. The pink triangle they will soon wear is a result of a judgement that they have broken Article 175A, by sexual act, by kissing, by embracing, by fantasy and thought. Some will be given an opportunity to recant by successfully completing sexual activity with a woman in the camp brothel. Most others will find themselves tormented from all sides as they struggle to avoid being

assaulted, raped, worked and beaten to death."

Cross-Border Organization Frees Jailed Teachers

Radical teacher-union leaders in Mexico were freed on bail February 3 after weeks of international organizing by educators across North America. Many leaders of Local 9 of the Mexican Teachers Union (SNTE) were arrested in early January for kidnapping, robbery, and incitement to riot for planning a protest a month before at the national senate building for recognition of their union election. The state dropped all charges, except incitement to riot, against the unionists. The local union elections are still unrecognized by the conservative national union, although public support for the radical teachers forced the state to consider the issue a political (not merely judicial) issue.

Students Ransom Library Books for Hispanic Studies

Activists in the Chicano Student Movement (MEXA) at Michigan State University checked out 5,000 books from the library February 18 to pressure the creation of a Chicano-studies major including more Chicano faculty. The students returned 4,000 of the books to respect co-students' reading but retained 1,000 until the Provost stops procrastinating from creating the Chicano-studies major. Out of 1,987 faculty members at MSU only 35 are Hispanic, tenure-track professors. Source: Jason Hughes, Chronicle of Higher Education

Corporate Invaders Pied at UC Davis

The Biotic Baking Brigade delivered a "cow Pie Special" last fall to the University of California-Davis Chancellor's face in protest of the campus' "strategic alliance" with corporate monoliths like Monsanto. Another two pies struck the Chief Executive Officers of two corporate allies upon the charge command of "Privatize This!" Two pie agents were detained while one "disappeared without a trace." The flavor of the two pies was pumpkin, to symbolize the 60% of food on US Thanksgiving Day tables that is estimated to be genetically-engineered.

Gary Fuller, Prof Targeted by CIA Re-hired

A professor at the University of Hawaii was re-hired last fall after the administration earlier obeyed the Central Intelligence Agency's wishes to fire the professor, Gary Fuller. Fuller was targeted after concluding in a study that there was little change of a rapid ethnic breakup in China. The professor was re-hired after Ralph McGehee, an ex-CIA consultant, threatened a lawsuit. "From the inception of CIA operations in Vietnam, it dominated many academic studies and institutions with reference to Vietnam to such a degree that a separate group of academics formed the organization that publishes the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars," he said.

ACTIVISM ABROAD

Students Close Administration to Protest Fees

Over 200 students at Goldsmith's College in London successfully closed their administration for at least two days beginning February 26 in protest against the expulsion of students not wealthy enough to pay tuition. The occupiers demand "the reinstatement of all expelled students [and] no further expulsions due to inability to pay fees." A participant's e-mail ends invitingly: "Drop by, hang out. Lots of good conversations, good music. We will all be here until our demands are met."

Palestinian Student Leader Denied Lawyer

Student Council President of Birzeit University in the West Bank is banned from meeting with a university human rights lawyer by Israeli security. Since the arrest, the Israeli authorities have issued four consecutive "prevention orders" to keep away a Birzeit Human Rights Action Project lawyer. Mohammad is one of 46 Birzeit students in Israeli prisons. Protests against this violation of international law and in concern for Mohammad's safety may be e-mailed to: Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, rohm@pmo.gov.il; Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, sar@justice.gov.il; and Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani, sar@mops.gov.il. In addition, a physics student, Jihad Husni Mohammed Shehadeh, was tortured in February by Israeli security agents at the infamous Hasharon interrogation centre.

Students Protest Fees at Oxford

Nearly 2,000 students attempted to occupy administrative offices at Oxford University January 22 in support of five people who refused to pay new tuition fees. "If this government has enough money to pay the legal fees of a mass murderer like General Pinochet, then they've got the money for us!" challenged Laura, one of the refusers. Police and their horses prevented a building occupation, but the action's strength attracted a suggestion from the radical music group Chumbawamba: "Rather than us wasting our breath asking [Prime Minister] Tony Blair to play fair, it would be more constructive and more fun, to invest in several large custard pies. Let's flan the bastards!"

Police Kidnappings Continue in Kashmir

Fifteen-year-old student Zahoor Ahmed Khanday was released after having "disappeared" for three days. He was only released after a global pressure campaign by Amnesty International. Other students and teachers have similarly been held hostage by police to force families to turn in more politically active relatives. Nearly 800 people have "disappeared" in Jammu and Kashmir since 1990. To write urgent actions in support of the disappeared, e-mail Scott Harrison of Amnesty International, sharri-son@igc.apc.org.

Activists Demand Murder Investigation

Twenty-four-year-old Anura Sampath was murdered after being tortured while in police custody on December 30 in Sri Lanka. Human rights activists request letters demanding an investigation. A postmortem inquiry concluded Sampath's death was due to assault. Demands for an inquiry may be e-mailed to Ambassador Dr. Warnasena Rasaputram, slembasy@clark.net.

Uniforms in Ontario

High school principals and governing conservative leaders plan a "code of conduct" including a school uniform for the 2.1 million high and elementary school students in Ontario, Canada. Ontario Education Minister Dave Johnson promotes "the atmosphere that's engendered with the uniform—the discipline, the general air" while a teachers' union leader reports that current school policies already deal with specific problems. The code of conduct includes mandatory house calls to absent students' parents, increased discipline for vandalism, and definitions of (un)acceptable language. "The fathers didn't like to hear that about their daughters," said Gail Barkic, a principal, about students commenting after seeing each other in inappropriate clothing.

Revolutionary Education in Chiapas

An innovative popular education program is flourishing in Chiapas with the solidarity of Schools for Chiapas in San Diego, California. Teachers and administrators in Oventic, Chiapas, said that their method of "curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and specialized skills will be directly linked to the indigenous reality of Chiapas." The local Indigenous Education Committee of the rebellious Autonomous Zapatista Junior High School proclaimed: "This entire process marks the beginning of a Zapatista education which we are designing to guarantee a multicultural, multiethnic, and scientifically based education without gender discrimination for all the indigenous and non-indigenous of the planet earth."

Solidarity is requested in the form of five dollar "bonds" to fund the school and its programs. Contact Schools for Chiapas in San Diego for more information at (619) 232-2841, fax (619) 232-0500.

Hunger-Strikers Fired on by Israeli Troops

Students fasting in solidarity with over 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails were shot at while mourning the murder of another student by the Israeli army December 10. Birzeit University canceled classes in honor of the slain student, Naser I'riqat, who was killed December 10 by a bullet to the head fired by an Israeli soldier. I'riqat was shot while trying to bring his younger brother down from the rooftop of their home during a protest. Over 1,000 students mourned I'riqat's death, many of whom ended their hunger strike to observe a traditional mourning period.

DECONSTRUCTING IRAQ

WHAT HOLLYWOOD CINEMA, NEWSWEEK, AND BOMBING BAGHDAD HAVE IN COMMON

by Brian Edwards-Tiekert

After February's protest against the sanctions on Iraq newspapers described the protesters as either fringe whackos or starry-eyed idealists, and the one quote re-printed in everything from *The Hartford Courant* to *The Peninsula* (a newspaper based in Qatar) was Albright's snappy come-back to hecklers: "Don't talk to me about genocide." *The Argus*, in typical fashion, quoted a random frosh to sum up the event: "I thought the protest was good, but no-one said what an alternative should be."

This remark might leave the protesters wondering "An alternative to what, exactly?" An alternative way to kill more than 13,000 civilians a month? An alternative way to not change the regime in Iraq? An alternative way to fuel religious fundamentalism and anti-US sentiment in the Middle East? An alternative way to keep 20,000 US troops stationed in countries where they've long since overstayed their welcome?

Hunger and disease have claimed some 1.5 million Iraqis to date. When the UN weapons inspection team (Unscm) abruptly pulled out of Iraq in December, it ended any hope that the sanctions would be lifted. Since then US policy has been to bomb the dead and dying. Over three months after Desert Fox's well-publicized four-day blitz, the US and Britain launch air strikes against Iraq nearly every day (well over a hundred times since January) hitting everything from radar installations to civilian housing complexes. Now the latest rules of engagement for US pilots let them fire on Iraqi installations without being directly threatened.

The Clinton administration has managed an air of righteousness throughout, carefully manipulating an inflated image of Saddam Hussein as fanatical terrorist, evil incarnate, and the greatest threat to civilization as we know it. In the name of one man the we've sentenced a population of 21 million. What it amounts to is this: the real battle over Iraq isn't fought on the ground or in the sky, but in news-rooms and press-conferences; there was never any question who would win the combat, but the battle for spin control rages on.

The real battle over Iraq isn't fought on the ground or in the sky, but in news-rooms and press-conferences; there was never any question who would win the combat, but the fight for spin control rages on.

Iraq Today

The bombings during the Gulf War damaged everything from water purification systems to power plants to waste treatment facilities. The sanctions prevent Iraq from importing the materials it needs to repair those systems. They also keep Iraq from buying the medical supplies it needs to combat the epidemics that result from having impure water, raw sewage in the streets, and a population with immune systems compromised by malnutrition. Many of Iraq's sewage plants today simply pump untreated sewage back into the Tigris and Euphrates rivers—70% of Iraq's population gets its drinking water from those rivers, and Iraq can't even import chlorine to treat it (because the chlorine could theoretically be used to make chemical weapons). Relief programs are woefully inadequate—they're crippled by lengthy approval processes and fall far short of the amount Iraq needs to rebuild its infrastructure. What relief does get into the country goes to the government and military first—as always the poor, the elderly,

and the children are hardest hit. UNICEF estimates that there are one million children under the age of five suffering from malnutrition in Iraq and that they are dying at the rate of 4,500 a month.

How do those responsible for these conditions deal with these figures? In 1996 Lesley Stahl interviewed then-Ambassador to the UN Madeline Albright on *60 Minutes*. "We have heard that half a million children have died," Stahl said. "Is the price worth it?"

"That's a difficult question," Albright responded. "But we think the price is worth it."

What exactly she thinks it's 'worth,' is unclear. When the UN first barred trade with Iraq just before the Gulf War, the sanctions were to last until the "authority of the legitimate government of Kuwait" was restored. When that happened eight months later, the Security Council re-wrote the terms—the sanctions were going to last until Iraq complied with the weapons inspections provisions in the cease fire. This December Richard Butler, the chairman of the UN Inspection Commission (UNSCOM), ended the inspections just short of completion (and without consulting the Security Council) on the grounds that Iraq had blocked inspections. Britain and the US followed up with an intensive four-day bombing campaign and Clinton announced that the sanctions will not end until Saddam Hussein is ousted from power. Effectively, that means there's no end in sight. No leader is going to resign power as a condition of surrender, and the sanctions and bombings have only shored up support for Hussein within Iraq—it's easy to rally behind someone who's taking a stand against a power that starves your children and bombs your towns.

The Politics

After February's rally I had the opportunity to speak with Albright for a few

minutes in President Bennet's living room. She justified the sanctions on two grounds—to prevent Iraq from re-building its might and threatening its neighbors, and to prevent terrorism.

The problem with the first is obvious: when we fought Iraq at the height of its powers, the 'war' lasted 40 days and cost less than 250 US lives—most of those due to 'friendly fire.' Now we're supposed to believe that after weapons inspectors have been blowing up munitions plants and arsenals in Iraq for eight years, after sanctions have eroded the country's infrastructure to the point where it can't feed its own children, Iraq represents a threat that its neighbors can't handle? Granted, Iraq didn't mobilize the elite Royal Guard or use its infamous chemical and biological arsenals during the Persian Gulf war—but the only thing that indicates is that Hussein may not be the insane megalomaniac fascist hell-spawned aggressor our policy-makers paint him as. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1989, it was with the tacit approval of a US diplomat, and it came after years of US backing and military support. The idea that after everything that's happened in the last eight years Iraq is miraculously going to recover its strength from the sanctions and inspections and then invade one of its neighbors is a joke.

The problem with justifying the sanctions on the grounds that they prevent terrorism is two-fold. First of all, terrorism is largely something foreign policy can't prevent—it's individuals, not nations, who carry out the attacks. It doesn't matter how much the US punishes Iraq, if someone sympathetic to Iraq really wants to kill Americans, they'll find a way. The solution may be not to put anyone in the position where they feel that kind of destruction is their only course of action.

Which leads to the second point: political terrorism is an act of resistance, not aggression—groups commit terrorism to protest situations that they don't have the military strength to change. One could argue that there is a greater risk of anti-US terrorism now, as our Iraq policy turns more and more foreigners against the US, than if we were to make peace with Iraq. Certainly cold war foreign policy in the Middle East contributed enormously to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and

anti-US sentiment, and Osama Bin Laden, according to his *Time* interview, has based his call to arms on the USA's treatment of Iraq.

So if one can dismiss the fantasy that Iraq represents a serious threat to its neighbors and the fallacy that the sanctions somehow prevent terrorism, the question remains: why are we starving children and bombing a country back to the stone age?

The most cynical explanation of our policy is this: our goal is to maintain the status quo—to keep Iraq a crippled state indefinitely, leave Hussein's regime in place (as any regimes that might replace it are unknown quantities), and maintain the evil specter of Saddam to justify a continued US military presence.

Certainly our legacy of foreign policy in the Middle East is that of maintaining a very diffuse balance of power. When the imperialist powers carved the Ottoman Empire into small states ruled by royal families, they assured that no one power would dominate the oil-rich area. Kuwait, for instance, was carved out of Iraq to block the latter's ocean access. During the Iran-Iraq war of the '80s, the US funnelled money and weapons to both sides

as part of a policy of 'dual containment.' Now policy-makers worry that full-fledged support for the only viable opposition in Iraq—Kurdish forces in the North and Shi'ite Muslims in the south—would mean eventually breaking Iraq up into three independent countries and undermining its utility as a bulwark against Iran.

Thus our incredibly half-hearted efforts at sponsoring resistance in Iraq: Congress approved \$97 million in support for rebellion in Iraq, but money without ground support isn't enough to sponsor a successful revolution—it's just enough to keep Hussein harried.

All of which leaves the US on shaky moral ground: to maintain our power in an oil-rich area, we've compromised the integrity of UN weapons-inspections programs, conducted a silent war against a civilian population, and claimed to do it all in self-defense. The question that begs asking is how do we get away with it? How have the powers-that-be sold Joe Blow American on a foreign policy that should leave him choking on his apple pie? The answer lies in media and mass culture, spin-doctoring and story-telling.

The Sanctions keep Iraq from purifying its water, treating its sewage, feeding its children, and curing its ill.



Surveying the Damage: A Home Destroyed by an Unexploded Missile in Downtown Baghdad

Culture

Last fall, shortly before the US started bombing Iraq again, a movie called *The Siege* came out. The plot is as follows: after two "Arab-speaking" terrorists (shown in traditional Muslim funeral shrouds) bomb a Brooklyn bus, terrorist threats against New York multiply like rabbits. The FBI calls in the army. The commander, played by Bruce Willis, declares martial law and throws every Arab in the city into internment camps built in stadiums. Understandably, the film raised a few eyebrows in the Arab-American community, especially as it drew a clear connection between Arabs and Islam, and between Islam and terrorism—the trailers intercut shots of Arabs praying in a mosque with explosions in downtown New York City.

What's the connection to the situation in Iraq? Our foreign policy there, which has more holes than a cheese grater, leans heavily on America's carefully developed obsession with Islamic fundamentalism and catastrophic terrorism (and the connection between the two).

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, terrorism has largely replaced the Communist Bloc in US discussions of foreign policy. Even as the rate of terrorist attacks has declined since the 1980s, the media has speculated endlessly about the potential for a new catastrophic terrorism. What if some of the weapons-grade plutonium leaking out of Russia falls into the wrong hands? What if some Arab makes it to the New York subway with a couple grams of anthrax in a zip lock bag? Our government uses the threat of terrorism to justify excessive military spending in a time when there's no real enemies left standing—we currently spend over \$7 billion a year just to prevent terrorism, and billions more attacking "terrorist agencies," from this summer's cruise missile strikes on two sites in Sudan and Afghanistan to the attacks we've launched against Iraq on the grounds it was hiding weapons and delivery systems.

Hollywood has eagerly built terrorism into its catastrophe narratives, turning society's fears into stories and giving ter-

ror a face. This face—as *The Siege* demonstrates—is that of the Arab Islamic Fundamentalist. Yet *The Siege* is only part of a recent tradition of Arab stereotypes in Hollywood. In *Executive Decision* (1996), Muslims hijack a passenger jet and prepare to unload enough nerve gas to kill millions; in another scene a Palestinian enters the dining room of London's Marriot with a bomb in one hand and the holy Qur'an in another. One of the masterworks of post-cold war grand action cinema is *True Lies* (1994), in which Arnold Schwarzenegger battles a group of terrorists called "Crimson Jihad." Not only does he stop the group from detonating a nuclear weapon over Washington, he also manages to showcase incredibly expensive military technology, meeting with his superiors in unbearably sleek war rooms and using a Harrier Jet instead of an expensive car to catch the terrorists in the end chase sequence.

How have the powers-that-be sold Joe Blow American on a foreign policy that should leave him choking on his apple pie?

How much have these stories shaped our expectations? Shortly after the bombings at US embassies this summer, every major newspaper in America had the same media-friendly picture of a bearded, turbaned Osama Bin Laden on its cover. Later, of course, the exiled Saudi millionaire denied responsibility, but he fit the profile when authorities needed a handy scapegoat. After the Oklahoma City bombing, the media speculated about suspects for days until authorities caught Timothy McVeigh—every suspect until that point was an Arab or a Middle-Eastern group. CNN called it a "Beirut-style car bombing," and released the names of "three men of Middle Eastern extraction" who had been arrested; USA Today ran the headline "Bomb Consistent with Mid-East Terror Tactics"; *The New York Times* pointed out that Oklahoma City has three mosques, and *The New York Post's* editorial read "in due course we'll learn which particular faction the terrorists identified with— Hamas? Hizbullah? The Islamic Jihad?"

There's a strong connection to the situation in Iraq now. Ending the sanctions has always (officially) hinged on the com-

pletion of weapons inspections, destruction of Iraq's arsenal, and the establishment of a monitoring program. Every time the US has bombed Iraq in the past nine years, the official justification has been that the inspections were somehow obstructed. Yet in recent years discussion of the goal of the sanctions has shifted from reducing Iraq's military capacity to reducing Saddam's terrorist capabilities. After nine years of sanctions, bombing, and inspections, the US can't argue that Iraq poses much of a threat to its neighbors. But if we say that we're afraid Saddam Hussein is developing a terrorist network, then we'll never destroy enough weapons to assure ourselves he doesn't have a vial of VX nerve gas stashed somewhere and waiting to be released at Disney World. The inspections (as well as the sanctions and bombings) can continue indefinitely.

Trust the mainstream media to capitalize on stereotypes and paranoia first: January 11th's *Newsweek* carried an article entitled "Saddam + Bin Laden?" and subtitled "It would be a marriage made in hell. And America's two enemies are courting." Evidently, for *Newsweek*, that peppy intro—which manages to simultaneously position Hussein in hell and homoeroticize him—was reason enough to print the more or less unfounded speculation that Saddam Hussein is trying to develop terrorist networks in the same circles as Audi Bin Laden. The two-page opening spread was dominated by half-page photographs of Hussein and Bin Laden, respectively captioned "A ruthless survivor" and "A patient plotter." The irony is that if they might more aptly have been captioned "The military threat who isn't and the terrorist who never was." Not only did Bin Laden deny responsibility for the embassy bombings this summer, every piece of evidence points to the fact that the site in Sudan we demolished in retaliation had no terrorist ties whatsoever. It was in fact what the Sudanese government said it was—a pharmaceutical plant that produced 50% of Sudan's medicine.

There was a small map of the Middle East printed on the last page of the *Newsweek* article. The only two cities marked were Baghdad and Kandahar (the city in Afghanistan that Bin Laden's allegedly based in), and the caption title read, "A New Axis in the Middle East?"

That particular title's interesting because it marks the dominant trend in media spin on Iraq—using the language of WWII to gain support. The idea is that WWII was the last “Good War” and that if you get people reading current events according to that script, they’ll back you all the way. Think about it—in Hitler, we found an enemy so evil we could righteously commit just about any atrocity to fight his forces—from the firebombings of Dresden and Tokyo to the internment of Japanese-Americans to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It started under the Bush Administration—to justify a war for oil speech-writers harped on the principle of standing against aggressors, describing Saddam Hussein’s past atrocities (which were backed by the USA) in lurid detail, and then using the language of World War II to describe Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait. On August 3, 1990 Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island was the first to be quoted calling Hussein “the Hitler of the Middle East,” but the analogy caught on fast. A *New York Times* column the next day entitled “Fruits of Appeasement” noted how the invasion of Kuwait caused “European commentators to remember Hitler.” A column the day after asserted that “Western leaders have failed in their duty to prepare action against the plainest threats of aggression since Adolph Hitler.” Bush’s first statements on the situation described how Iraq’s tanks stormed Kuwait “in blitzkrieg fashion.” In a speech to the Pentagon he said that “A half a century ago, our nation and the world paid dearly for appeasing an aggressor.”

It’s interesting to see the same rhetoric repeated as we use NATO forces to bomb Serbia—Clinton officials have made sure to point out as many times as possible that they must intervene in Kosovo because that’s where WWI and WWII started (which is a blatant lie, but that’s another issue). At the same time, politicians and newspapers recall accounts of “ethnic cleansing” from eight years ago, drawing poor analogies to the Jewish genocide in Germany.

In this “New World Order” it would appear that there’s never any question who’s going to win a war—we will. As the US spends five times more on its military

as than any other country on the planet, the real struggle will always be maintaining its air of moral superiority. The Clinton administration pulled it off with Iraq—somehow they managed to replace the 21 million citizens of a sovereign state with the figure of an evil madman in the minds of most Americans. They’re mak-

ing it work in Serbia—the Kosovo Liberation Army is just as repressive, violent, and nationalistic as the Serbian government, but somehow we picked them as the good guy. This administration’s greatest battles, it would appear, will be fought over stories and representations, rather than tank-ranges and ditches. ☛

SPY GAMES AND INSPECTIONS

Brian Edwards-Tiekert

There are two glaring injustices at the heart of the most recent attacks on Iraq. The first is that Iraq’s alleged non-compliance with weapons inspections proved to be largely manufactured. The second is that Iraq’s allegation that the US was using UNSCOM as a front for espionage proved to be true.

By the time Richard Butler pulled his inspectors out of Iraq, UNSCOM had carried out 8,000 inspections, eliminated all known chemical weapons facilities and weapons, and destroyed 817 of Iraq’s 819 Scud missiles. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had reported that Iraq had cooperated and they were convinced Baghdad was not pursuing a nuclear weapons program. Butler himself had told Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov that the commission’s work was nearing completion, which would have meant an end to the sanctions. When Butler abruptly stopped the inspections ten days later, it was on grounds that Iraq had blocked five inspections out of 427 in the previous month. If a statement by the Iraqi foreign ministry is to be believed—and neither UNSCOM nor the US has denied it—those five violations amounted to a 45 minute delay, a rebuffed visit to a small Baathist party office, two Friday inspections where no-one was working at the sites because of the Muslim Sabbath (but inspector’s weren’t blocked), and a refusal to cooperate with the nearly impossible task of interviewing every science undergraduate at Baghdad University.

The pullout itself was suspect: On December 16, *The Washington Post* suggested that the Clinton administration had carefully orchestrated the timing and content of Butler’s unfavorable report. On December 18, *The New York Times* reported that the US air strikes had been planned since December first and that Butler’s report was simply a formality. Indeed—Clinton told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the report days before it actually came out. When Butler did release his report and pull out of Iraq, he did it without consulting the UN Security Council, the *only* group he was supposed to answer to. So who was he taking orders from?

Previous to the most recent rounds of inspections, Iraq had challenged UNSCOM on the grounds that US agents were using the commission to do spy work. In January, a barrage of leaks in the US and the UN proved the allegations true—inspectors had carried hidden scanners to record coded transmissions as early as 1996 and US inspectors with ties to the CIA and the NSA had installed high-tech eavesdropping devices at several sites. The US tried to pass the spy work off as business as usual—the claim was that it was simply using intelligence to aid the inspections—but UNSCOM officials had at several points accused the US of not sharing all the information it was collecting and decoding. Then the *New York Times* reported that much of that information had gone to pentagon planners, and they used it to target the bombings in December’s air strike. As many saw it, the only way to use that information to target bombing was to track people (since they already knew where the buildings were)—in other words, they used their spy work to attempt political assassination by air bombing.

In light of that news, Iraq has understandably refused to ever let UNSCOM back in, and Russia has recommended to the UN that the commission be disbanded and alternative solutions explored. Many in the international community are outraged—UNSCOM’s record jeopardizes the legitimacy of all weapons inspections programs, now and in the future. ☛

DUPLICATION NATION

THE MORAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF HUMAN CLONING

by Chan Mun Chun

On February 23 1997, Ian Wilmut, a quiet scientist in Scotland, made a remarkable announcement. He had developed a new cloning technique and used it to clone an ewe from the cell of a grown adult sheep. However, he said the technology would only be used to enlarge populations of genetically engineered animals (the lab he was working in later genetically engineered a lamb which contained a human gene whose product would be secreted in the animal's milk), and would not be used to clone humans. Nobody was fooled. The reaction to his announcement was beyond anything he, or anyone else, could have imagined. For a while, everyone seemed to have an opinion about human cloning, and everyone was expressing it. From religious leaders to politicians, bio-ethicists to pseudo-scientists, everyone was shouting, and frankly, hardly anyone bothered to listen. It is clear that those who oppose any and all experiments that could possibly lead to human cloning were shouting the hardest. Before you can say "re-election," several anti-cloning bills were introduced in Congress, First/Bond human cloning Prohibition Act [S.1601] among others, which not only stops public funds from being spent on research in this field (such a law has been in effect since a long time ago), but also bans private funding for this type of research. Similarly, in Europe, nineteen countries have signed an agreement which bans human cloning.

The shouting ended softly. None of the anti-cloning bills have passed the Senate. The religious fanatics have gone on to other issues, the pseudo-scientists went back to looking for space aliens, and the politicians are busy working out how to forgive the president. The scientists, as always, went back into their labs, working

quietly and diligently, pushing the boundaries of what is possible. The public forgot, or became apathetic. On July 1998, a professor in Hawaii used the Dolly technique to clone mice, thereby proving that the technique was viable for other mammals. The media gave it very little coverage, and the announcement went by unnoticed by the general public. In December 1998, the same technique was used to clone cows in Japan. Again, the public slept through it. Finally, on December 14 1998, researchers in Korea announced that they had managed to clone human cells using the same tech-

For a while, everyone—from preachers to politicians, bio-ethicists to pop scientists—had an opinion about cloning.

nique. The cells lived and divided to the fourth cell stage, before they died from a genetic disease (the cells were selected specifically because of the presence of this genetic disease which ensures they die before they can develop beyond the four cell stage). An American media obsessed with the presidential scandal hardly gave it any coverage at all, and thus the public did not even blink. However, the point was made; human cloning is possible, and it is in our immediate future.

Human cloning may be "impossible to stop" as research is being done with "stunning speed," according to Harold Shapiro, chairman of the National Bioethics Advisory Board. Even if every anti-cloning law is passed in the United States, research will continue in other countries (none of the major experiments cited so far has been performed in the United States anyway). Therefore, nothing we can do here in the United States will truly stop the development of this technology. Will the procedure then develop enough to be used on a commercial level on humans? There are many

problems, but scientists are optimistic that, with the pace of current research, the problems can be solved within a few years.

When that happens, if the reaction to Ian Wilmut's announcement is anything to go by, our society will react negatively. There is a chance that laws will eventually be passed to ban human cloning in this country. Whether such a law would be constitutional or not is still being debated today. In his paper, "The Constitution and the Clone," Cass R. Sunstein, a law professor at the University of Chicago, argues that the courts may judge that such a law is constitutional, due to a subtle definition difference between the right to reproduce (protected under the Constitution) and the right to replicate. However, the paper points out that even if such a law is judged to be constitutional, human cloning would be much like abortion before Roe vs. Wade. Those who demand the procedure will find a way to get it, either through illegal means, or in other countries. Thus, any attempt at banning human cloning will not be completely effective. Attempting to ban cloning would, however, severely limit availability for Americans.

As a negative reaction towards human cloning would have some effect of the procedure's availability, the question then is how should we react to this much maligned technology? We have to consider our reaction very carefully, for our decision will affect how future generations of Americans (or whichever nationality we belong to) live and reproduce. Such a decision should not be made lightly, and should certainly not be made based on gut reaction. An important first step is to educate ourselves on the facts.

There are two types of cloning: embryo cloning and adult DNA cloning. Embryo cloning involves splitting a blastula (a ball of undifferentiated cells which is a precursor to the embryo after fertilization) and separating the two halves. Each

half (which consists of a few cells) would then be able to develop independently of the other into a new organism, genetically identical to one another. One of the two halves of the split blastula can be frozen, thawed at a later date, implanted into an organism's ovum, and would still develop normally. This technique has been used for a long time to clone cattle and other agricultural animals. It has also been used on humans to remove a cell from a blastula during in vitro fertilization to test it for severe genetic diseases.

Adult DNA cloning (or somatic cell nuclear transfer) is the technique which Ian Wilmut and his lab developed. It involves removing a cell from a grown organism, obtaining the nucleus from this cell, inserting the nucleus into an egg from which the original nucleus has been removed, and then implanting the new cell into the ovum of a female. The clone will have the same nuclear genes as the original. However, because the mitochondria will come from the egg, any genetic trait controlled by genes in the mitochondria will be similar to the egg donor. Therefore, it is conceivable that the clone and the adult will have different characteristics.

There are two reasons why normal individuals would want to clone another person: to conceive a child with the same qualities as an existing individual, and to have children if either of the parents is infertile. The characteristics displayed by a particular individual depends on two factors: genes and environment. No one really knows the extent to which environment affects the characteristics of a child. For all we know, clones could be as different as siblings. Reproductive technology today, in spite of all our advances in in vitro fertilization, is successful only 10% of the time. If cloning offers a higher possibility of success, then certainly it is a

choice which many couples might consider. Furthermore, if there is a risk of genetic diseases being passed on to the child through the combination of the genotype of the husband and wife, then cloning would also ensure that the child is free of the genetic disease.

One technique scientists are experimenting with is to use somatic cell nuclear transfer technology to grow organs in the lab which is specific to the donor for organ transplant. This is done by creating fast dividing cells from grown adults and controlling the differentiation of these cells so that they develop into organs and tissue that the nuclear donor would require. The chances that such an organ would be rejected by the body (a common problem in organ transplants today) would be almost nil. Of course, this is still highly experimental as much research still needs to be done on cell differentiation.

Therefore, human cloning technology

Now the fanatics have gone on to tele-tubbies, the pseudo-scientists are back looking for aliens, and the politicians are working on how to forgive the president.

would be useful both in reproduction and transplant surgery. There are, however, some reservations about the technology. Some of these reservations are associated with specific religions and beliefs. It is not the purpose of this article to debate or discuss these arguments except to say that in such a religiously diverse country, it is unlikely that any of these reservations would be shared by all the represented religions. Arguments based upon a religion should apply only to people of that religion.

All the non-religious arguments against human cloning are basically fears about the negative impact the technology will have on the individual and the society. On the individual level, many are worried about the psychological and medical impact on the clone. The medical questions will be answered with experiments on other animals long before the technology is used on humans. For example, currently some scientists worry that since the chromosomes come from a grown adult, the clone would be prema-

turely aged. Another potential problem is the fact that somatic cell nuclear transfer technology has never been used successfully on a nucleus taken from a male organism. Once the solutions for these problems are found through experiments with other animals, it is unlikely that an unexpected medical problem will crop up when the technique is used on humans.

There are also concerns that the clone would be scarred psychologically due to unexpected stress from unreasonable expectations (if she is the clone of someone special and important) or because she knows she is a copy of someone else. This is where society comes in, for it is the interaction of society with the clone which will determine his psychological makeup. An educated and mature society would realize that due to the interaction between environment and genes, it would be unreasonable to expect a clone to be identical to his genetic predecessor. A mature society would treat the clone as

someone unique (as she is), and there would be no reason why a clone would feel segregated or alienated from the rest of society. The question is then: Do

we live in a mature society?

On the level of the society, the impact cannot be precisely predicted by anyone. All we have are opinions and possibilities. In considering these possibilities, it is important to remember the following facts: Firstly, clones would be completely human, and will have the same rights as any other human. Therefore, any scenario with a slave population and such belongs purely in the realm of science fiction. Secondly, there are over 5 billion people on the planet right now. It would take a long time before the number of cloned people reaches even 1 million. Any argument about decreased diversity in the population, or a eugenics program through cloning is hence, improbable.

For the moment, all is quiet. The only sound that can be heard is the sounds of the lab: the whoosh of the centrifuge, the clicking of test tubes against one another. However, the noise will come, and all will again be madness. Let us then use this quiet time to think, to learn, and to prepare, for human cloning will come.



RADICAL HONESTY

CAN WE DO AWAY WITH POLITENESS?

by Talla Pindyck

"We all lie like hell. It wears us out. It is the major source of all human stress." (Brad Blanton)

In the quaint Shenandoah Valley of Virginia lies Sparrowhawk Farm, the center of the Radical Honesty movement. Yes, there is an honesty movement. Like a religious movement, Radical Honesty seeks to aid people in the pursuit of truth in life. It differs, though, in that Radical Honest preaches that the only way to reach truth is to abolish politeness and be completely honest.

The Radical Honesty movement even has its own website, www.radicalhonesty.com. The page issues a warning: "This site contains adult language and adult ideas. Radical honesty. Transform your life by telling the truth." Ahh, a cult, you think, as you click to find out more. What you find is a description of the ideology, its purposes, answers to Frequently Asked Questions, and tips on how to live the good life. As a bonus, there is a biography of the leader and founder, Brad Blanton. It is Brad who answers FAQ's, Brad who lists the tips, Brad who is quoted from his book throughout the website. Brad is radically honest.

Brad preaches that in order to have stress-free, satisfying, healthy relationships, one must be completely honest with oneself and others. Radical Honesty, as Brad puts it, is "a kind of communication that is direct, complete, open, and expressive." Through this kind of interaction, Brad believes that you will be "set free." He believes that dishonesty causes inward unrealized stress that inhibits individuals and asks us to offend others freely if we care about pursuing authentic relationships with them. Honesty requires that people face their insecurities, but Brad assures us that "stay[ing] with them past the hurt" will only strengthen the relationship.

One of my favorite points of Brad's is his response to the question "Do you feel we have to be honest with ourselves before we can have a relationship with someone else?" Brad, all-knowing but brash, states "A person who says 'I was honest with myself, but decided not to tell' is just another miserable liar and will have to suffer the consequences." An extreme statement, but that's the way Brad likes 'em. Basically, if we do not share parts of our identities with others, we can never truly recognize them as being parts of ourselves. And, if we do not share parts of our identities with others because we fear others will be offended or "put off" — we will forever walk on eggshells around our untouched, unrecognized areas of insecurity.

Recently, I was offended by a friend of my mother's. I had just finished speaking to this woman unsteadily in Hebrew, knowing that next to me, my mother was silently shaking her head at my grammatical errors, when the woman asked me why my Hebrew was so bad. She wasn't describing my grammar, though, she was

describing the thickness of my distinctly American accent. I don't think she knew how embarrassed she made me feel by pointing out this deficiency of mine: the language barrier. The language barrier that makes visiting family a difficult, often unpleasant experience, is the kind of subject I don't like to think about. To have the truth shoved in my face offended me.

What stands out to me about this event is not so much my experience in the world of insecurity and self-doubt, but the strangeness of the experience itself. As the friend was attempting to pursue a cordial, friendly conversation with me, it seemed unnatural that she would make such a brash statement. My mother's friend violated some sort of basic politeness code that we have in our society.

I've been thinking a lot about the importance of this politeness code, and the way its rigidity varies from culture to culture. The politeness code makes conversation as pleasant as possible. The idea behind it is that if you want to continue to converse with another person in a friendly manner, you must abide by certain rules. The kind of response that my mother's Israeli friend had to my shaky Hebrew does not abide by the American politeness code, and, in our society, would be seen as a signal that she did not want to continue conversing in a friendly manner. In an Israeli society, though, her merciless honesty would be not only accepted, but expected.

I am convinced that the degree to which a person is honest is not so much a matter of circumstance, or even temperament, but a matter of culture, and the kind of politeness code in that particular culture. Brad generalizes that "we all lie like hell," but it seems that some people lie more than others. And I have realized, through my experiences growing up in a cross-cultural background, that because Americans abide by such a strict politeness code, we lie quite a lot. I'm not so much talking about the little lies, the culturally pervasive mannerisms, which get us through the day. (i.e. "There's nothing wrong, I'm just tired.") I am talking about the withholding of personal opinions, the regulation and, therefore, suppression of feelings or thoughts for fear of seeming impolite. A friend of mine who is fluent in Hebrew once joked that any Israeli can spot her American heritage a mile away, just by the way she acts in a restaurant. "I'm not vocal enough about getting the check," she said. And she cannot yell for the check, or voice her opinion on the overcooked steak, because in her mind, a product of growing up in an American society, to do so is impolite.

Though my friend might sound weak-spined and timid, not at all representative of anybody else, least of all the American culture, her discomfort in speaking her mind to strangers, especially about unpleasant things, can probably be shared by most of us. In my opinion, America's extreme preference for "harmony" and repulsion towards conflict is not only largely a result of conven-

tion, but altogether unhealthy. Undoubtedly, the existence of some sort of politeness code is quite valuable (you can say what's on your mind, but you don't have to be rude about it); it is the high level of rigidity that is, in my mind harmful. The more valuable "pleasantness" in a conversation becomes, and the more our speech is regulated and refined by the formality inherent in our rigid politeness code, the less genuinely comfortable any sort of interaction will necessarily be. Maintaining pleasant interactions with people whom you hate, gritting your teeth for the sake of some sort of acceptable mode of social conduct, pretending to like your steak when it is over-cooked, all increase your stress

level by confining your emotions to the cell of your body.

For this reason, though Brad's ideology might seem a bit hokey at first, his words hold more truth than meets the eye. Our politeness code leads us to lying excessively, and therefore leading more stressed lives. But even if disregarding the politeness code is realistic, how likely is it? Our culture's politeness code is ingrained within us, whether we want it there or not. At the same time, if there is the capacity for an honest society, there is a way for this ideal to be achieved. Take Brad's advice: "Fuck politeness... Tell the truth." 🍌

WORK AND PLAY

THE SIMPLE IDEALS OF THE NO WORK MOVEMENT

by Daniel Dylan Young

Work is coerced productive activity. Work is something that you do not want to do, but you are forced or feel forced into doing. Wage slavery to a capitalist pig is work, but so is, say, cooking with a macro-biotic vegan co-operative if you don't really want to do it. Such an undertaking becomes work if you only do it because of shame or guilt which makes you renounce individual pleasure in favor of an abstract "duty" or "society" or even "community."

The usual material signs of work are constraining time clocks and bosses. The tell-tale physical ill effects of work include stress, heart disease, back strain, eye strain and sleeping disorders—not to mention hazards associated more specifically with certain occupations. The telltale attitudes of a "worker" include an obsession with time (Ben Franklin really gave this concept a push to popularity with his "Time is money" litany back in Poor Richard's Almanac)—but this exists alongside an equally strong desire to escape into a world without time through drinking, sex, vacations on tropical tourist traps or other futile devices.

Work is usually forced on people (at least to begin with) by making it impossible for them to survive materially without engaging in it. This tactic serves the material benefit of the elite group who have hoarded the resources necessary for life. But people can also be tricked into work through a devious little mind-fuck called a "work ethic." Work ethics use morality and religion to force you into work with the tools of shame, guilt and renunciation. While work ethics are extremely effective, they are usually employed side by side with the force of physical coercion—just to be absolutely certain that work is not shirked, and that the system maintains itself.

Play, on the other hand, is what you want to do: activities which you find physically, intellectually, emotionally or sensually enjoyable and fulfilling. Play can be unproductive in the usual sense of the word, but who cares? Isn't maintaining one's psychological balance through diverse pleasurable activities just as important as making steel—or making money?

But play can also be extremely productive in the traditional sense. When growing and building the necessities of life is carried out voluntarily, in a spirit of passion and pleasure based on

popular understanding of the necessity of co-operation in human society, then we no longer have "work"—we have productive play. Even the worst types of work, like cleaning the collective toilets, say, or the work required in intensive agricultural cultivation done by hand, can and have been treated as play. Anthropological data from "primitive" agricultural societies have shown that some of the most grueling work can be done effectively and pleasurably if it is carried out by a group of amiable people who, un-hurried by the outside power of bosses or time-clocks, can rest, dance and sing at will.

Work hurts. We all know it. Trade unions try (when they're not completely bogged down with bureaucracy) to make work just the tiniest bit less painful, by fighting for less of it under less violently coercive circumstances. Most so-called "communists," on the other hand, have in practice taken the same model of work ethic that the capitalists used and tried to apply it to their own abstract and ridiculous concept of the "people's state." They don't want work to disappear, they just want it serve their own ends. But if the "masses" want to liberate themselves from the forces seeking to torment and dominate them, then the first thing that they have to attack is the concept of work. Not just alienated labor, not just wage slavery, but work itself must be abolished.

These are the precepts of the Zero—Work movement, simplified for the sake of brevity. To learn more, try reading "The Abolition of Work," or other writings by Bob Black. You can find some of them online at <http://au.spunk.org/texts/writers/black/sp000156.txt>. Or to try to understand the complex but most definitely sick history of the "work ethic" in our society, check out Max Weber's seminal Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Until the revolution or a reasonable facsimile thereof, I will leave you with a few words from an essay Bob Black's which may clear up a couple of points: "We're tired of work, and propose an alternative which (as anyone who takes the time to read our writings will understand) is not simply idleness but the creative fulfillment of human needs through necessary actions which are fun in themselves. Workers of the world ... relax!" 🍌

BOOK REVIEW

BY SARAH WILKES

Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World Carl Hiaasen (Ballantine) \$8.95

I accept that Disney is evil.

I'm your average, well-minded liberal pinko, and if someone tells me that the Walt Disney corporation violates federal laws by running its own illegal (magical) kingdom, complete with townships, laws, and militia, I'll believe it. After all, just look around you: is Disney not profiting outrageously off our kids' fondness for soft-spoken animated animals, instilling in them the sense that they **MUST BUY** Disney merchandise at Disney stores, preferably at Disney World or Disneyland? Is Disney not monopolizing children's culture, not only here but all over the globe? Aren't you suspicious of any large corporation that comes away untainted by any dirt flung at it, by the media, even if it's the case of a fatal high-speed crash in Orlando, or a corpse of a sexually violated rhinoceros?

No?

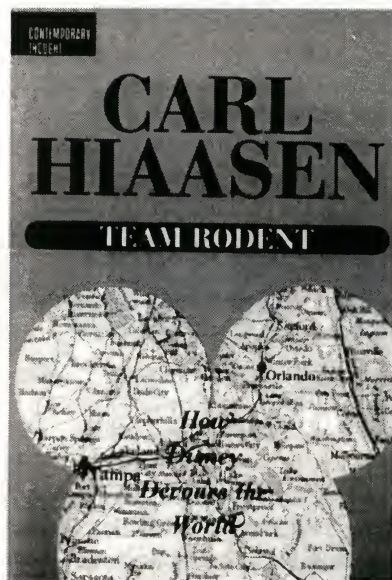
Well, shit, I guess yellow liberal journalism failed again. Carl Hiaasen, going after an all-too-easy target, crashes right on the bull's eye, but his style is so casual as to make the work dismissable. Describing a potential new Disney scandal, the escape of a full-grown lioness from Disney's JungleLand in Florida, he breaks in:

Aren't you suspicious of any large corporation that comes away untainted by any dirt flung at it by the media even if it's the case of a fatal high-speed crash in Orlando, or a corpse of a sexually violated rhinoceros?

"Sweet Jesus, just imagine: the hot-blooded 450-pound namesake of a Disney cartoon lion [Nala, after the character in *The Lion King*], bounding down Main Street USA...and with one lightning swipe of a paw taking down Goofy or Pluto, or maybe one of those frigging chipmunks. A harrowing primal eruption—and Disney could blame no one but itself!...and while it is being widely reported that the big cat is declawed, I choose not to believe it. Forgive us our fantasies."

I'm sorry, but muckraking, even with colorful vocabulary like "frigging," just isn't going to rally the troops anymore.

Again and again, while attacking a corporate giant—whose rap sheet includes several accidental deaths at Disneyland, multiple EPA standards violations, the economic and moral ruination of Orlando, and the aforementioned dead rhino (a silly tale Hiaasen spends an entire chapter on, but one that could have




given animal rights activists a chance to take Disney down)—Hiaasen comes out sounding the looney, paranoid David-against-the-Goliath. His (presumably) self-written bio on the back cover says it all: "His dream is to be banned forever from Disney World." After reading his treatment of the great immutable Mickey ("Disney will devour the world the same way it devoured this country, starting first with the youth."), I doubt Disney CEO Michael Eisner gives a hoot

about fist-shakers like Hiaasen. In all likelihood this book won't get him banned from anything more insidious than the Associated Press.

A couple of years ago, I read in a not too reliable fanzine called *Murder Can be Fun* (MCBF) that since Disneyland's creation, eight accidental deaths have occurred there due partly to tourists' stupidity, but due partly also to Disney's negligence. This is worth investigating into. However, Disney is a major corporate

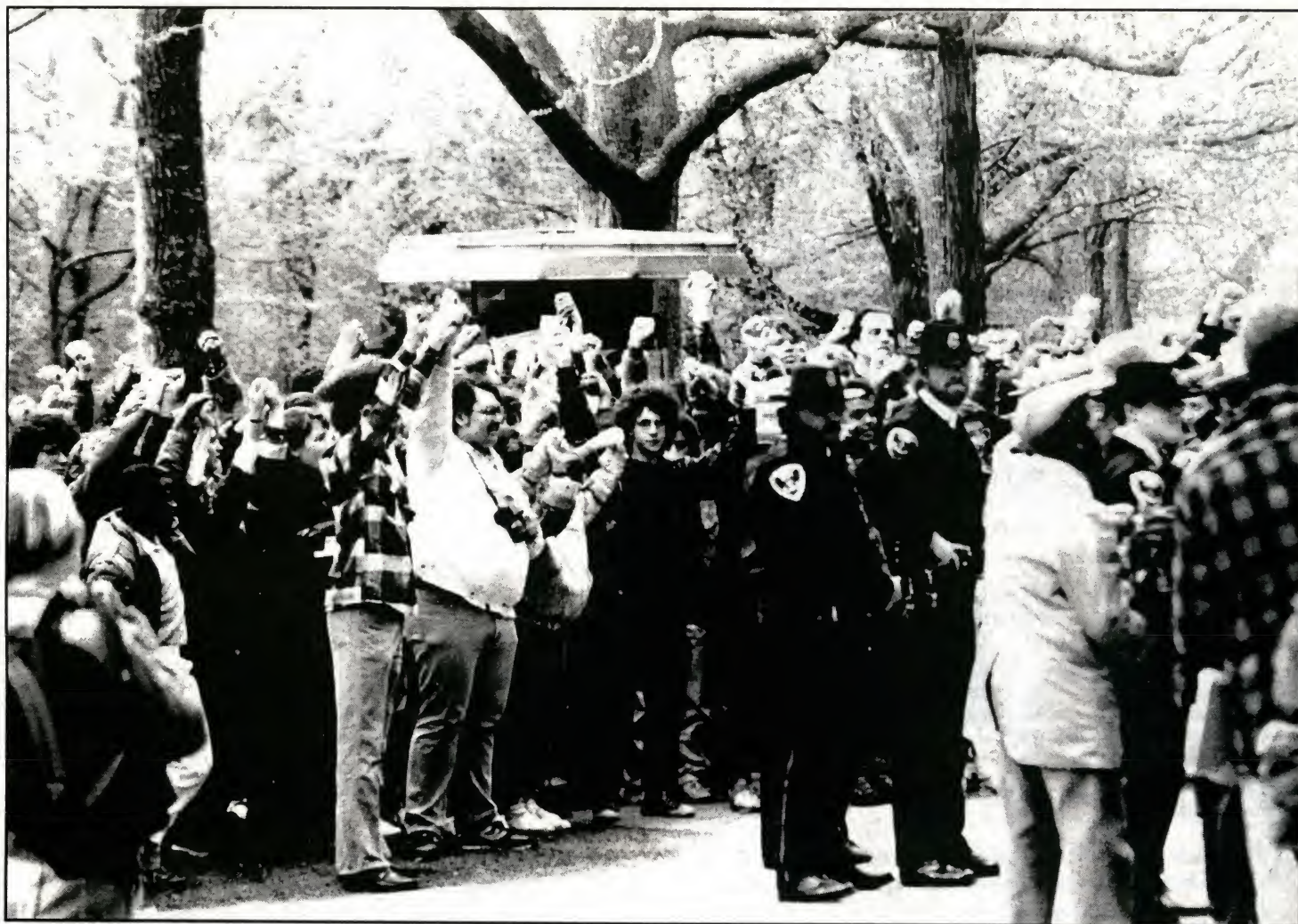
giant as well as a well-established cultural artifact, and cannot be torn down by grumpy treatises such as *MCBF* or *Team Rodent*. I would suggest a full investigation of Disney by the mainstream press, but what have they done for us lately?

I strongly believe that every factoid Hiaasen presents about Disney's revenues, dirty tricks, and crass publicity stunts should be public knowledge. Maybe I'm wrong in labelling *Team Rodent* as irresponsible journalism. This is, after all, a Random House (subsidiary) publication, and I did, after all, purchase it at a bestsellers bookstand in the St. Louis airport. Perhaps more Jane Publics like myself will pick this up as they wait for their connecting flights, or browse their favorite big-name, monopolizing bookstore, and it will generate enough interest to get a serious investigation of Disney going. One done by someone who doesn't wish to be banned from Disneyworld. 

ASIAN AMERICAN AWARENESS MONTH

Every April, Wesleyan recongnizes the cultural, intellectual, and political achievements of Asian Americans and Asian through Asian American Awareness Month. This year's theme is "Dispelling Myths, Transcending Boundaries: Towards a New Vision Of Asian America."

28 March, Sunday 7pm. Downey House	Asian American Awareness Month convocation.Reception @ AAA House to follow.	16 Friday 8pm. World Music Hall. 10pm-2am. Place and Price TBA	Women of Color Dance Concert: The Essence of She. \$3 ISA/Pangea Party.
1 April, Thursday 7pm. Woodhead Lounge 7pm MPR.	Linking the Histories of People of Color: Seminar and slide show with Don Kao. KSA Cultural dinner. \$3	17 Saturday 12pm. Westco Courtyard 8pm World Music Hall 10pm-2am. Downey House	Korean Drum Troupe. South Asian Cultural Show. \$3. KSA Semi Formal \$3 single, \$5 couple.
2 Friday. 10pm-2am. Psi U	Triad Party. \$2	18 Sunday 5.30-7pm. AAA House	AAA cook-off. \$3.
3 Saturday 5.30 -7pm. Westco Cafe	International Cafe. Food and Performances from around the World.	20 Tuesday 7pm. Shanklin 107	A/PAA Film Series: "Charulata."
5 Monday 7pm. Westco Cafe	Exocitize This! Asian American Women Sing Out. Workshop and Performance With Magdalen Hsu-Li.	21 Wednesday 11-12 pm Place TBA	Mendi Workshop.
6 Tuesday 7pm. Shanklin 107	A/PAA Film Series: "Fallen Angels."	22 Thursday 8pm 92 Theater	Play: "Laughing Out Loud" Directed by Darryl Uly.
8 Thursday 9pm. AAA House 7-10pm Butt C	Asian American MEET Market. Come hang out and Enjoy snacks! Bridging the Gap. Workshop, Breaking stereotypes amongst Wesleyan Women.	23 Friday 7.30pm AAA House	Asian Games Night.
9 Friday 7pm. PAC 002 10pm-2am. Westco Cafe	Asian American Activism: Past and Present Panel Discussion with Fay Chiang, John Kim, and Wayne Lum. Shanghai Express Party. \$2.	24 Saturday 12 pm. CSA Court Yard 10pm-2am. Westco Cafe	AACT Cultural Show: Mabuhay. Guest speaker: Professor Pyung Gap Min. Bhangra Party. \$2
10 Saturday 5.30-7pm. AAA House	A/PAA Noodle Shop. \$3.	25 Sunday 3pm. AAA House 5.30pm. AAA House	A/PAA Elections. Youth Empowerment and Coalition Building. Seminar with Young Lee AAA BBQ. \$3
12 Monday 7pm . Shanklin 107	A/PAA Film Series: "Irma Vep"	8pm. World Music Hall	Invisible Men. \$3
13 Tuesday 8pm. Russell House	Legacies of The Asian American Movement: Keynote Speaker: Grace Lee Boggs	27 Tuesday 7pm. Shanklin 107	A/PAA Film Series: "Shopping For Fangs."
14 Wednesday 4.30pm. PAC 002 8pm.Place: TBA	The Phillipine-American War and its Aftermath. Panel/Discussion. A/A Writer's Lit. Series with Marilyn Chin.	29 Thursday 7.30pm. PAC 001	National mobilization Against Sweatshops. A Presntation: Labour Struggles in NYC. With activists NMASS.
15 Thursday 7.30pm. PAC 001	Imagining an empire: American popular culture and the philosophy; 1898-1946. A seminar by Prof. Richard Slotkin.	30 Friday 8-10pm. Eclectic 11pm-3am. Eclectic	Peeling the Banana. Performances about Asian American feminism, sexuality, literature and music. \$1. Forbidden City Party. \$2 with ticket from Peeling the Banana, \$3 without.



It Could Happen to You.

**Next Month—
Student Activism Theme Issue**

HERMES

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